

Message Text

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AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 9942

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT EG

SUBJECT: ASU CENTER GROUP GETS ORGANIZED

1. AFTER MANY WEEKS OF DELAY, CENTRIST ASU GROUP HAS FINALLY ANNOUNCED FORMATION OF 34 MEMBER "POLITBURO." MEMBERSHIP, SYG ABU WAFIYA ANNOUNCED GLIBLY, WAS APPOINTED, RATHER THAN ELECTED BY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP, BECAUSE GROUP PREFERS AVOID ANY POSSIBILITY OF INTERNAL CONFLICT DURING ORGANIZATION'S INFANCY.

2. NAMES ON LIST ARE NOT PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE. WITH EXCEPTION OF PRIMIN SALIM WHO IS CONFIRMED AS RAPPORTEUR, NO MEMBERS OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT ARE INCLUDED; NEITHER ARE THERE ANY LEADING EGYPTIAN "PERSONALITIES." WORKERS AND FARMERS TAKE 50 PCT. OF SEATS. LABOR IS REPRESENTED BY SOME SYNDICATE HEADS (ONE OF WHOM, SA'D MUHAMMAD AHMAD, MAY BE REAL COMER), AND BY EX-MIN LABOR GHARIB, WHO IS FAST BECOMING POLITICAL HAS-BEEN. PRESS IS REPRESENTED BY PRESS SYNDICATE HEAD AL-SAWI, AMONG LEAST RESPECTED OF SENIOR EGYPTIAN JOURNALISTS. GROUP OF RATHER LUSTERLESS EX-MINISTERS (INCLUDING US-EGYPTIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY HEAD RIAD), MIDDLE LEVEL BUREAUCRATS, CAIRO UNIVERSITY VICE RECTOR BADRAN, AND OTHER RELATIVE UNKNOWNNS MAKE UP BULK OF MEMBERSHIP. TOKEN WOMAN IS MINED UNDER-SECRETARY MAGIDA KHALIFA.

3. MOST INTERESTING NAMES ON LIST FALL INTO CATEGORY OF
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RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATION. TWO COPTS, A BISHOP (SAMUEL) AND A

FARMER, ARE INCLUDED AS GESTURE TOWARD EGYPT'S LARGEST MINORITY. WELL KNOWN AZHAR FIGURE SHAYKH BISAR IS ONLY OBVIOUS "ISLAMIC" REP. THERE IS ANOTHER NAME, HOWEVER, WHICH IS CERTAINLY "ISLAMIC:" SALAH ABU RAHIQ. LATTER IS IDENTIFIED IN PRESS ONLY AS A FORMER ARAB LEAGUE OFFICIAL. IN FACT, HE IS WELL KNOWN TO BE LEADING MEMBER OF MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD "SECRETARIAT."

4. INCLUSION OF ABU RAHIQ IS INTRIGUING. UK EMBASSY COLLEAGUE HAD TOLD US WEEK AGO THAT IKHWAN HAD FORMALLY TURNED DOWN REQUEST BY RIGHTIST ORGANIZATION LEADER MURAD, WHO HAD ASKED BROTHERHOOD FOR OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT. REPORTEDLY, MURAD WAS TOLD FIRMLY THAT IKHWAN NOT ONLY WOULD NOT SANCTION POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY ITS MEMBERS BUT WOULD ACTIVELY OPPOSE IT. ABU RAHIQ'S PRESENCE IN SALIM'S COMMITTEE SEEMS EVIDENCE THAT IKHWAN HAS RECONSIDERED ITS POSITION AND DECIDED UNOFFICIALLY TO ENDORSE FORUM OF THE REGIME WHICH HAS ALLOWED BROTHERHOOD TO REEMERGE AS COHERENT ORGANIZATION.

5. SALIM'S GROUP WILL CONTINUE ANNOUNCE THOSE DESIGNATED SERVE IN LOWER ECHELON COMMITTEES. GOVERNATE LEVEL COMMITTEES ALREADY RELEASED AND INCLUDE SOME FAMILIAR NAMES: EG, SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY'S MASHHUR (ISMA'ILIYYA) AND MRS. SADAT (MENUFIYA).
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